

SECTION III: FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANS

This section describes Procedures and Technical Specifications for cost-sharing of Forest Management Plans.

Procedures: Forest Management Planning

The following procedures are for New Forest Management Plans, as well as amendments, expansions in area, and Revised/Continuing Forest Management Plans.

1. Applications - Forest Management Plans

- a. Landowners who have not had a previously cost-shared Forest Management Plan may apply for a New Forest Management Plan.
- b. Landowners who have had a Forest Management Plan cost-shared within the past 10 years may apply for an Amendment of the existing Forest Management Plan
- c. Landowners who have had a Forest Management Plan cost-shared within the past 10 years, but who have acquired additional abutting or nearby forestland in the 10-year period, may apply for an Expansion in area of the existing Forest Management Plan. If necessary, MFS will determine whether an Expansion or a New Forest Management Plan may be cost-shared.
- d. Landowners who have had a Forest Management Plan cost-shared more than 10 years ago may apply for a Periodic Update of a Forest Management Plan.
- e. The Augusta MFS office will process all applications for Forest Management Plans.

2. Approval

- a. Maine Forest Service shall review applications to establish eligibility, need for the practice(s), feasibility of the practice, and priority, consistent with state priorities. Review may include a field visit at the discretion of the District Forester. Applications will not be approved unless cost-share funds are available.
- b. MFS will establish cost-share rates and maximum cost-share available based on the application information, and funds for approved practices will be obligated at the time of approval.
- c. New applicants/landowners who have not previously received cost-sharing will receive priority.
- d. Upon approval, MFS will inform the landowner and Stewardship Forester that work on the plan may begin, and the amount of cost-share approved.

3. Performance period/Cancellation

- a. The performance period for all plans will be 12 months from the time of approval.
- b. MFS will provide Extensions of three months for expired plan applications, upon request and pending availability of funds, and notify the landowner and Stewardship Forester of the extension. Plans that are not completed at the end of the 3-month extension will be automatically cancelled and the funds de-obligated. Landowners may re-apply for cancelled plans.

4. Claim for payment/Certification of performance

- a. Landowners shall claim payment for completed plans by submitting (with the assistance of the Stewardship Forester) the appropriate documentation to the MFS District Forester. .
- b. The following documentation will be required in order to claim payment for completed Forest Management Plans:
 - i. A completed claim for payment form (provided by MFS), identifying the landowner, Stewardship Forester, total eligible wooded acres, and total cost.
 - ii. A copy of the completed plan.

- iii. A copy of the Stewardship Pledge, signed by the landowner.
- iv. A copy of the Forester Certification form, signed by the forester who prepared the plan.
- v. A copy of the actual bill or bills for services presented by the Stewardship Forester to the landowner, including the original bill date.
- vi. Proof of Payment. Proof of Payment for Forest Management plans consists of:
 - 1. a copy of the cancelled check (both sides), or
 - 2. a similar written record generated by the bank that clearly shows that funds in a given amount have been transferred by the landowner to the forester.

An Affidavit, on a form provided by MFS, may be submitted as proof of payment in lieu of the above documents if they are not readily obtainable. Check number(s) on the Affidavit are required information.

If payment is made in a form other than a check, a notarized statement signed by the forester asserting that payment has been received, and identifying the type and dollar value of payment, may substitute as proof of payment.

In all cases, MFS reserves the right to request additional documentation.

- c. MFS Foresters will review plans for adherence to program standards, and conduct additional field review of a sample of plans/projects routinely and at their discretion.
- d. Plans in some areas (esp. the Canada Lynx Area and the 8 Atlantic Salmon Watersheds) may be subject to further review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act. USFWS review may delay or preclude cost-sharing of such projects.
- e. If plans do not meet standards, they will be returned to the Stewardship Forester for correction.
- f. Once an acceptable plan and adequate accompanying documentation has been received, the District Forester will forward copies of the claim for payment form, stewardship pledge, forester certification, and proof of payment to the Augusta office. The documentation will be reviewed the Landowner Outreach Forester. Cost-share reimbursement will subsequently be authorized and sent by Maine Forest Service.

Forest Management Planning

Purpose: The purpose of this practice is to encourage comprehensive forest management planning by landowners with the assistance of a professional forester. For all plans:

- A Stewardship Forester or an Intern Forester under his/her supervision must prepare all plans.
- Landowners must sign a pledge that they intend to conserve, nurture, enhance, and protect the forest resources of their land, to implement the planned practices recommended by the plan(s), and to maintain the practices for a minimum of 10 years.

Description:

FMP-1a Development of a New Forest Management Plan (10-50 wooded acres)

FMP-1b Development of a New Forest Management Plan (51+ wooded acres)

This practice component is intended for landowners or forest lands which have not previously had a Forest Management Plan under MFS cost-share programs.

Cost-share rates:

FMP-1a (10-50 wooded acres)	50% of actual cost, not to exceed \$400
FMP-1b (51+ wooded acres)	50% of actual cost, not to exceed \$8/wooded acre

FMP-2 Amendment of an existing Forest Management Plan

This practice component is intended to allow amendments to any part of a existing Forest Management Plan, which are necessitated by a change in landowner objectives, forest conditions, identified projects, or new information during the original 10-year planning horizon of the Plan. It may include some or all portions of the woodland originally covered by the plan, and revise information or recommendations in the original plan.

The Amendment is not required to provide recommendations beyond the original 10-year planning horizon. Amendments, once approved, are considered part of the original plan. An Amendment may be approved no more than once per 10-year planning period.

Cost-share rate:

FMP-2	50% of actual costs to the landowner, not to exceed \$120 per plan amendment
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FMP-3 Expansion (in area) of an existing Forest Management Plan

This practice component is to allow expansion of an existing Forest Management Plan to additional acres acquired by the same landowner, within the 10-year planning cycle of the original plan. The Expanded Plan must include a suitable map and address all required elements of the original Forest Management Plan for the new wooded acres. It is not required to provide recommendations beyond the original 10-year planning cycle of the original plan.

Cost-share rate:

FMP-3	50% of actual costs, not to exceed (the lesser of) \$5 per wooded acre or \$150
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FMP-4 Periodic Update of a Forest Management Plan

This practice component applies on forest lands where a Forest Management Plan exists, but has reached the end of the original planning period. The practice is intended to support development of a Forest Management Plan for the next planning period.

Where a Forest Management Plan exists, but ownership has changed (except within a family), the new landowner may be approved for a New Forest Management Plan.

The plan must meet all requirements of a new Forest Management Plan, and update all portions of the plan to reflect current landowner objectives and forest resource conditions.

It must also include a summary of accomplishments and projects completed under the original plan and an assessment of how the landowner's objectives have been met. The plan must include recommendations for management over the coming planning period (10-year minimum).

Cost-share rate:

FMP-4a (10-50 wooded acres)	50% of actual cost, not to exceed \$300
FMP-4b (51+ wooded acres)	50% of actual cost, not to exceed \$6/wooded acre

Technical Specifications - FOREST MANAGEMENT PLANS

These standards outline requirements for Forest Management Plans prepared with Maine Forest Service cost-sharing funds. In a few instances, the standards specify the sources of, or methods for developing, certain information. The standards also include suggested, optional items.

These standards are established to:

- Inform participating landowners and foresters;
- Ensure that public funds are expended on work that meets a minimum standard of quality and completeness, and that plans adequately address measures to protect public resources; and
- Ensure that landowners receiving assistance are provided with Forest Management Plans that are accurate, informative, easy to understand and use, and that reflect and advance their forest management objectives.

The format for presenting this information is up to the landowner and the Licensed Forester. Plans must be clear, easily understood, and well organized. The outline suggested by these standards may be followed, but is not required. Use of tables, graphics, appendices, etc. is acceptable and encouraged.

General Property Information ¹		
Topic		Description
Landowner	R ²	Owner of record, including name & current address, consistent with town tax and county deed information, for all parcels included in the plan.
Plan preparer	R	Contact information for Maine Forester (including name, address, telephone, and license number) who prepared the plan. (If prepared by an Intern Forester, both the Intern's and the Supervising Forester's contact information must be given.)
Plan date	R	Date the final plan was completed or was presented to the landowner for final review/acceptance.
Planning Period	R	Period (years) covered by the plan (minimum 10 years).
Town and county	R	Name of town, township, or plantation, and county.
Tax information	R	Tax map/plan number and lot number(s) of the parcel(s), based on town tax maps or LURC maps.
Parcel location	R	Sufficient information to locate the parcel(s) on the ground, including reference to local landmarks, and the nearest road.
Landowner goals and objectives	R	A complete statement of the landowner's long-term forest ownership, stewardship and related objectives for the property (minimum 10 year planning horizon). Multiple objectives should be listed in priority order.
Plan Summary	O	A brief summary of highlights from the plan, management direction, recommendations, and how the landowner's objectives will be met by following the plan. (Typically 1 page or less.)

¹ The headings for separate sections in these standards are to identify and group similar information. They suggest, but do not require, a possible outline for the plan.

² Items marked "R" **must** be included in all plans.

Items marked "(R)" are required under certain circumstances, or if warranted by landowner objectives stated in the plan.

Items marked "O" are optional.

Acreage³ of Land Use/Cover Types		
Topic		Description
Forestland (productive)	R	Acreage of forested land with existing tree cover with at least 10% stocking, capable of producing commercial timber products (≥ 20 cu. ft. /acre/year), and that is not/will not be developed or maintained for a nonforest land use.
Reserved forestland (productive)	(R)	Acreage of forestland (if any) which the landowner intends to withhold permanently from timber harvesting, or land which is permanently reserved from timber harvest due to legal constraints. Required if property is enrolled in the Maine Tree Growth Tax Program.
Non-commercial/ Unproductive forestland	R	Acreage of forestland which is incapable of producing 20 cubic feet of wood per acre per year due to persistent natural conditions.
Non-forested area: ⁴	R	Acreage of areas without existing tree cover, or land with trees maintained for another use (e.g. residential, fields, heath, barren, etc.)
Water bodies	R	Area of lakes or ponds contained by the property
Wetlands	R	Area of nonforested wetlands (bog, swamp, marsh)
Developed land	R	Land developed for residential, commercial, or associated uses.
Agricultural land	R	Cropland, hayfields, pasture, orchard, blueberries

Maps⁵		
Topic		Description
Location map	R	A map to locate the property with respect to public roads and known landscape features.
Land use/Forest stand map	R	A map of sufficient quality, scale, and level of detail to be both descriptive of the existing forest and useful for management planning purposes. At a minimum, must include property boundaries, main access ways, forest stands identified in the plan, nonforested wetlands, water bodies, and other nonforested areas. (If used, photocopies or reproductions of other maps or air photos must be easily readable, of good quality, and clearly annotated/enhanced to identify required features). Natural features identified by the Maine Natural Areas program (including significant or essential wildlife habitats, habitats supporting rare, threatened or endangered plants and animals, and rare or exemplary natural communities) must be included on this or as a separate map or maps ⁶ .
Soils map	R	A map showing soil types/conditions found on the property. Indicate the source of soils data.
Other maps	(R)	Optional unless the landowner's stated objectives (e.g. for recreational roads & trails, important wildlife habitat features, etc.) warrant additional map information. May be a separate map or incorporated into the main/forest stand map.

³ All acreage should be listed to the nearest acre.

⁴ Breakdown on non-forested acres beyond the subcategories shown is not required.

⁵ All maps require:

1. Landowner name, town map and lot number
2. North arrow (indicate magnetic or true north)
3. Scale (scale bar and representative fraction or ratio scale)
4. Sources of information used
5. Legend of primary symbols used (including Forest Stand designations/symbols).

The Land use/Forest type map also requires:

6. Preparer's name, signature, and date of preparation
7. Latitude/longitude of a reference point on the property (degrees, minutes, seconds) based on topographic maps, GPS, or similar source.

⁶ MNAP natural resource information is available at no cost to landowners and foresters.

General Conditions of the Woodlot		
Topic		Description
General woodland description/history	R	A property overview giving major forest types, general description of the landscape, and general land use and recent ownership history (including tenure of current owner).
Boundary lines	R	A description of the condition of all property lines, as observed in the field. Identify in the plan where field evidence is lacking or inadequate, and include recommendations to preserve/establish evidence.
Terrain/Hydrology	R	A general description of terrain (land form, slopes, and general geology). A description of hydrology, including water bodies and/or wetlands occurring on the property.
Watershed name/position	O	The watershed (stream, lake, river, etc.) in which the property is located, the relative position of the property in the watershed, the HUC (Hydrologic Unit Code) number of the watershed, and/or similar information.
Soils information	R	A brief description of soils on the property referencing the USDA county soils map. Soil suitability in relation to current/potential tree species composition and growth (e.g. site index). Limitations to operability related to soil type (such as slope, drainage, erosion potential, etc.).
Access	R	A description of existing public and private roads, trails, and related improvements or conditions that allow access to and over the property by forest management equipment, for recreation, or other uses.
Interaction with surrounding properties	O	A description of natural or human influences on/from adjacent properties, that may affect forest management decisions.
Legal obligations	R	A brief summary of forest laws that apply (e.g. Forest Practices Act), as well as legal requirements that affect forestry specific to the parcel (e.g. zoning, shoreland areas). Describe any lease agreements, deed restrictions, covenants, or similar land use restrictions relating to forestry, and their management implications.
Property tax status	R	Specify if/which forested portions of the property are enrolled in Tree Growth, Farmland, or Open Space.
Field methods statement	R	A brief narrative outlining the fieldwork done to prepare the plan, esp. to develop stand descriptions/prescriptions and other information. If applicable, include the number/type of field plots/points, and related methods used.
Accomplishments	(R)	A summary of accomplishments, projects, and/or harvesting completed under a pre-existing cost-shared plan (in the past 10 years), and an assessment of how the landowner's objectives have been met. Required if the plan is a Periodic Update of a previously cost-shared Forest Management Plan.

Non-Timber Resource Planning Considerations⁷		
Topic		Description
Threatened and endangered species, and rare or exemplary natural communities.	R	<p>A description of the known or likely presence of state and/or federal, threatened, or endangered plant and animal species, and rare and exemplary natural communities. At a minimum, must be based on maps from, or consultation with, Maine Natural Areas Program and Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Habitat supporting threatened or endangered plants and animals; • Rare or exemplary natural communities; • Significant wildlife habitats (e.g. Deer Wintering Areas, Wading Bird and Waterfowl Habitats); and • Essential habitats (e.g. Bald Eagle nesting sites) <p>(If no occurrences are identified, include a statement to that effect.)</p>
Fish and wildlife habitat elements	R	A general description of primary existing/observed fish or wildlife habitat elements and opportunities to maintain or enhance current diversity. (Based on forest structure, composition, and related features such as presence of snags/den trees, coarse woody debris, mast trees, openings, wetlands, etc.). Describe specific habitat interests identified by the landowner (if any).
Water quality, wetlands, riparian areas	R	A description of water bodies, wetlands, and riparian areas present, and current or potential concerns/benefits related to forest management.
Historical, cultural & archeological sites ⁸	R	Identification of sites of historical, cultural, and archaeological interest on the property. Must include information based on consultation with the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. If no occurrences are identified, include a statement to that effect. Other information from field observation such as stone walls, cellar holes, etc. may be included if indicated by the landowner's interests.
Recreational opportunities	(R)	A discussion of primary recreational activities that occur on the property. Required if recreation is a landowner objective; or if unauthorized recreation is significant and/or impacts other management activities/objectives.
Aesthetic quality	(R)	A discussion of scenic and aesthetic resources of the property. Required if aesthetic/scenic qualities are a landowner objective.
Protection from fire	O	A discussion of any unusual vulnerability to fire and recommended measures, if any, to reduce the likelihood of forest fire.
Other important natural features	O	A description of other natural features on the property of special interest to the landowner, and how they will be protected.

⁷ Discussion of these considerations should include a description of specific values/resources based on field reconnaissance and other sources, and identify how these relate to landowner objectives.

⁸ Information on known historical, cultural, and archaeological resources is available at no cost from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission.

Individual Stand Descriptions ⁹		
Topic		Description
Cover type	R	Identification of the stand type, identifying dominant species and size class. Must reference one of several common stand typing systems (USFS Forest types; SAF cover types; Maine Natural Community Classification, or similar).
Stand area (acres)	R	The area of the stand in acres. The same stand (i.e. same cover type and structure) may occur in several locations on the property.
Stand composition and structure	R	A description of the tree species present and stand structure. Include canopy structure and primary tree species by size (e.g. by diameter/height classes, canopy position, crown class, etc.); understory trees, if present; regeneration of seedlings/saplings by species and frequency/abundance.
Stand age/history	R	A description of past land use(s) of the stand. Include current age structure, and the approximate date of stand establishment (if even-aged), or of establishment of the primary age classes/cohorts (if multi-aged). A general description of stand development processes/events. (May be based on field observations, increment boring, and/or historical information, e.g. aerial photographs.)
Stand health	R	A description of the health and condition of the stand, based on direct field observation and other documentation. If significant problems exist, include species affected, observed type/degree of damage, and agent(s) (if known) e.g. insect, disease, animal, wind, ice, etc. Indicate any special vulnerability of the stand to future damage. Identify (generally) available silvicultural methods to control existing or future damage.
Stand volume	R	An estimate of stand volume. Include primary species/species groups and general product classes (e.g. percentage of sawtimber/pulp).
Stand stocking	R	A quantitative estimate of site occupancy by primary species, including an estimate of basal area. May be supplemented by stem density, average stand diameter, diameter distributions, and/or other descriptors.
Stand quality	R	A description of current and potential timber quality of the stand based on species composition, acceptable growing stock, and general product classes.
Growth rate	R	An estimate of current stand-level annual growth rates. (May be based on soils, increment borings, stand growth models, USFS growth estimation methods, or similar methods).
Long range silvicultural objectives	R	A description of long-range, achievable silvicultural objectives for the stand and silvicultural systems to achieve landowner goals. Include a description of the desired future condition of the stand, and the recommended silvicultural system's primary components (e.g. regeneration, intermediate treatments).

⁹ These requirements apply to each stand. Stand descriptions must be provided for all areas of productive and nonproductive forestland. All stand descriptions must be based on adequate fieldwork to provide accurate and useful information.

Required fieldwork: A field inventory based on fixed area plots or variable radius points is required, to include all productive stands EXCEPT:

- Seedling and sapling stands with less than 6 cords per acre volume (by ocular estimate);
- Other stands with less than 6 cords per acre volume (by ocular estimate), where no harvesting is planned within ten years;
- Other stands where no harvest is planned/likely within ten years due to:
 - legal restriction, or
 - terrain that is inoperable with conventional equipment. Lack of existing access does not exempt stands from this requirement.

Where no inventory is required, field observations and ocular estimates are acceptable as a basis for required stand information.

Plot data: Field plots/points must include, at a minimum, species and diameter (at breast height, <=2" classes) for all trees >5.0 dbh inches.

Sample size: A field inventory must include a minimum of 10 samples on any parcel. The field inventory for the property must meet one of the following standards for sampling intensity. Sampling must occur in all stands where the inventory is required:

- Fixed area plots: a minimum 3% sample by area (distributed randomly or systematically);
- Variable radius plots: an average minimum intensity of 1 sample point (10 BAF) per 3 acres, or 1 sample point (15 BAF) per 2.25 acres, or 1 sample point (20 BAF) per 1.5 acres (distributed randomly or systematically);
- A showing that estimated Total Stand Basal Area, for each inventoried stand, is within a sampling error of 30% with a probability (confidence interval) of 68% or greater. For statistical purposes individual stands of 10 acres or less may be grouped with another stand of similar type and structure to produce a single statistical estimate/error;
- A showing that estimated Total Woodlot Basal Area for all inventoried stands is within a sampling error of less than 15% with a probability (confidence interval) of 90% or greater. For statistical purposes (e.g. stratified sampling) individual stands of 10 acres or less may be grouped with another stand of similar type and structure to produce a statistical estimate/error.

Prescriptions & Recommendations		
<i>Recommendations must be consistent with the landowner's objectives, and all objectives must be addressed.</i>		
Topic		Description
Stand Prescription(s)	R	A statement of recommendations regarding silvicultural treatments, based on field observations, stand inventory data, and silvicultural principles specific to each stand, which will most effectively advance long term silvicultural objectives over the ten-year planning period in that stand. May include both non-commercial and commercial treatments. Include sufficient quantitative stand information (e.g. basal area pre- and post treatment)) to implement the prescription.
Stand Summary Table	O	A summary table listing all stands found on the property, and including stand type, area, prescriptions, recommendations, etc.
Project recommendations	R	A description of individual projects recommended for the next ten years (minimum). Include planned noncommercial silvicultural activities and commercial harvests based on individual stand prescriptions. Include sufficient information to describe how each project will be implemented, expected outcome(s), and how it will meet the landowner's objectives. Include essential project details or requirements (project planning & monitoring, location(s)/area, season, approximate volumes to be harvested, estimated cost/revenue), as appropriate for the landowner to evaluate the recommendation.
Recommendations to protect environmental values ¹⁰	R	Recommendations for protecting environmental values including, but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threatened and endangered animal species; • Rare plant species ranked S1 or S2 by the Maine Natural Areas Program; • Exemplary natural communities identified by the Maine Natural Areas Program; • Fish & wildlife habitat; • Water quality, wetlands and riparian areas; • Historic, cultural or archeological values identified by the Maine Historic Preservation Commission; • Others as identified by the landowner (e.g. recreational values, aesthetics). These recommendations may be included in stand prescriptions/project recommendations.
Other management activities	(R)	A statement of non-silvicultural recommendations for management activities to meet the landowner's objectives (e.g. boundary line maintenance, nest boxes, access improvements, administrative tasks, management plan update, etc.) Required if warranted by the landowner objectives and field conditions.
Project schedule	R	Table or similar chronological overview of all recommended actions or projects over the life of the plan (10 years). Should include a brief description of the activity, affected stands/areas, estimated costs or revenues, and timeframe.

¹⁰ Note: Leaving natural or other features (e.g. nonforested wetlands) undisturbed/as they are may be an appropriate recommendation in some cases. In others, harvesting may be compatible. Maine Natural Areas Program can assist in developing appropriate management strategies. Maine Historic Preservation Commission can also provide assistance for protection of historical, cultural, archaeological features. For federally listed species, recommendations should avoid or minimize impacts to habitat.

Maine Forest Service WoodsWISE Forest Management Plan Standards - Checklist				
	General Property Information		Non-timber Resource Planning Considerations	
	Landowner	R*	Threatened and endangered species, rare or exemplary natural communities	R
	Plan Preparer	R	Fish and wildlife habitat	R
	Plan date	R	Water quality, wetlands, riparian areas	R
	Planning period	R	Historical, cultural, archaeological sites	R
	Town and county	R	Recreational opportunities	(R)
	Tax map information	R	Aesthetic quality	(R)
	Parcel location	R	Protection from fire	O
	Landowner goals and objectives	R	Other important natural features	O
	Plan summary	O		
	Acreage of Land Use/Cover Types		Individual Stand Descriptions**	
	Forestland (productive)	R	Cover type	R
	Reserved forestland (productive)	(R)	Stand area	R
	Noncommercial/unproductive forestland	R	Composition and structure	R
	Nonforested area:		Age/history	R
	Water bodies	R	Stand health	R
	Wetlands	R	Stand volume	R
	Developed land	R	Stand stocking	R
	Agricultural land	R	Stand quality	R
			Growth rate	R
	Maps		Long range silvicultural objectives	R
	Location map	R		
	Land use/Forest stand map	R		
	Soils map	R		
	Other maps	(R)		
	General Conditions of the Woodlot		Prescriptions and Recommendations	
	General woodland description/history	R	Stand prescriptions	R
	Boundary lines	R	Stand summary table	O
	Terrain/Hydrology	R	Project recommendations	R
	Watershed name/position	O	Recommendations to protect environmental values	R
	Soils information	R	Other management activities	(R)
	Access	R	Project schedule	R
	Interaction with surrounding properties	O		
	Legal obligations	R		
	Property tax status	R		
	Field methods statement	R		
	Accomplishments	(R)		

Note: The above list represents a checklist only. The full standards further explain required items.

* Items marked "R" **must** be included in all plans.

Items marked "(R)" are required under certain circumstances, or if warranted by landowner objectives stated in the plan.

Items marked "O" are optional.

** These items are required for all stands. Stand descriptions must be based on adequate fieldwork and an inventory for some conditions.